Less use of jute for packaging grains and fertilization

2195. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons why the jute-bags are being reduced in use by the Central Government in packaging foodgrains and fertilizers;

(b) the steps Government propose to take to give a footing to the jute mills in order to stand by the workers and jute growing cultivators; and

(c) the steps Government decided to take to save the jute mills in the face of liberalisation of in-flow of synthetic bags and sacs from abroad?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI BASANGOUDA R. PATIL): (a) The Government issues mandatory packaging norms for the commodities to be packed in jute bags under the Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987 from time to time. Urea was exempted from the purview of the mandatory packaging order w.e.f. 01.09.2001. The compulsory packaging norms for foodgrain has been reduced to 80% w.e.f. 12.07.2002. These orders are issued keeping in view the interests of jute farmers, jute industry and the end-user sectors.

(b) and (c) In order to ensure the viability of the jute sector, including the jute mills and jute farmers, the Government is considering to launch a Jute Technology Mission (JTM) with the following objectives:—

(i) to reduce crop duration, improve fibre quality, reduce cost of jute cultivation;

(ii) to increase productivity and quality of jute fibre;

(iii) to create strong market linkages for raw jute and to assist jute growers to get better price for their crops;

(iv) to increase productivity in organized jute sector, develop new diversified jute products and increase their market share.

The Government also provides financial assistance to jute industry under the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS). For providing incentives for exporters, the External Market Assistance (EMA) Scheme has been extended for a period of one-year w.e.f. 01.04.2002. The Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) Scheme has also been extended to the jute sector.